

Message Text

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ACTION SNM-02

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AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 1414

DEPARTMENT FOR S/NM; ARA; AID FOR SER/INC

DEA FOR EOIL

CARACAS FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR CO

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS; STATUS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH GOC
ON INCREASED INTERDICTION EFFORTS

REF: BOGOTA 0981

1. SUMMARY. NARCOR, DEA-SAIC AND AID NARC ADVISOR
COMPLETED EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS FEBRUARY 3 WITH
CHIEF OF JOINT STAFF, GENERAL CARLOS LOMBANA (JUST NAMED
COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES) AND HIS ADVISORS REGARDING
GOC PLANS TO UNIFY NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS AND MOUNT
A MAJOR INTERDICTION CAMPAIGN. WE HAVE INFORMED GENERAL
LOMBANA THAT WE WOULD REPORT FULLY ON OUR DISCUSSIONS,
AND WOULD ASCERTAIN LEVEL OF US ASSISTANCE WHICH US
COULD OFFER: GENERAL LOMBANA EMPHASIZED THAT GOC
CANNOT ADVANCE ON ITS PLANNING UNTIL IT KNEW DEFINITELY
WHAT US AID WOULD BE AVAILABLE. HE STRESSED THAT THE
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EXTENT AND INTENSITY OF THE NEW EFFORT DEPENDED UPON

THE TRAINING/EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT IT, AND THEREFORE THE LEVEL OF US AID WAS ESSENTIAL IN DETERMINING WHAT THE GOC WAS GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO. WE, FOR OUR PART, EXPLAINED TO GENERAL LOMBANA THAT AVAILABILITY AND AMOUNTS OF NEW NARCOTICS CONTROL FUNDING WAS SUBJECT TO CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION AND TECHNICAL FEASIBILITIES AND LEAD TIMES, BUT THAT WE WOULD INFORM HIM AS SOON AS WE HAD DECISIONS FROM WASHINGTON. WE THUS HAVE SOMETHING OF A CHEICKEN-EGG SITUATION. WHILE WE WILL SEEK TO MOVE PLANNING ON BOTH SIDES IN TANDEM, THERE IS A REQUIREMENT FOR PROMPT DECISIONS AS TO WHAT WE CAN OFFER GOC. OUR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS IN A REVISED NCAP FOR CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION WILL BE FORWARDED BY SEPTTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. ON FEBRUARY 3 EMBASSY GROUP CONCLUDED A SERIES OF EXPLORATORY AND EXPLANATORY CONSULTATIONS WITH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS ON GOC PLANS FOR AN INCREASED NARCOTICS INTERDICTION EFFORT AND ORGANIZATIONAL REFORM. WE INFORMED GENERAL LOMBANA, CHAIRMAN OF JOINT GENERAL STAFF, WHO WAS THE KEY OFFICIAL DESIGNATED BY MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE TO BRIEF US, THAT WE WOULD REPORT FULLY ON PROPOSALS, AND SEEK DECISIONS FROM WASHINGTON AS TO WHAT LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE WE CAN PROVIDE. GENERAL LOMBANA STRESSED THAT ASSURANCES OF SUBSTANTIAL US ASSISTANCE WOULD BE NECESSARY AND HIS ADVISORS INSISTENTLY AFFIRMED THAT THE EQUIPMENT TRANSPORT/COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES OF THE ARMED FORCES, THE POLICE, THE DAS AND THE CUSTOMS WERE FULLY TAXED AND REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN ON-GOING PRIORITY INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS. THERE WAS NO SURPLUS FOR SHIFTING TO NARCOTICS. WHILE THE GOC WAS PREPARED TO INCREASE ITS BUDGET ALLOCATIONS TO THE DEGREE IT COULD, THEY AFFIRMED, THEY COULD NOT THEMSELVES PROVIDE THE MAJOR CAPITAL ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE MAJOR INTERDICTION EFFORT THEY BELIEVED NECESSARY AND WERE WILLING TO UNDERTAKE. THEREFORE, THEY ARGUED, A MAJOR INTERDICTION EFFORT WAS DEPENDENT UPON US ASSISTANCE. WE, FOR OUR PART, EXPLAINED THAT WE COULD NOT MAKE DECISIONS HERE, AND AID LEVELS WERE SUBJECT TO BUDGETARY, APPROPRIATION AND TECHNICAL AVAILABILITIES. CONFIDENTIAL

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WE MADE CLEAR THAT THEY SHOULD NOT EXPECT A LEVEL OF \$50 MILLION.

3. GENERAL LOMBANA REVIEWED THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL PROPOSALS (SEE REFTTEL), AND IT MAY BE USEFUL TO WASHINGTON END-USERS TO RECAPITULATE THESE: THE CORE OF THE PLAN HAS TWO MAJOR FEATURES--THE DELEGATION BY PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY TO THE MINISTRY OF

DEFENSE OF OPERATIONAL AND COORDINATING CONTROL AND DIRECTION OF ALL POLICE AND PUBLIC FORCES ENGAGED IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT; AND THE CREATION OF A BOGOTA-BASED NATIONAL TASK FORCE, WHICH WOULD BE AN INTELLIGENCE AND ACTION DIRECTING BODY, COMPOSED OF AND COMBINING REPRESENTATIVES AND RESOURCES FROM THE THREE ARMED FORCES, THE POLICE F-2, THE DAS, CUSTOMS AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (FOR JUDICIAL POLICE AND LEGAL PREPARATION PURPOSES). THE TASK FORCE WOULD BE COMMANDED BY A SENIOR MILITARY OFFICER, PROBABLY THE JOINT CHIEFS INTELLIGENCE HEAD, THE D-2. THIS TASK FORCE WOULD COMPILE, COLLATE AND ANALYZE INTELLIGENCE FED TO IT FROM ALL SOURCES (AND COULD LEVY REQUIREMENTS), DRAW UP PLANS IN THE LIGHT THEREFOR AND DIRECT MAJOR OPERATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THEM. FOR OPERATIONAL PURPOSES IT WOULD HAVE AVAILABLE TO IT THE EXISTING NARCOTICS UNITS IN THE F-2, DAS, CUSTOMS AND AG OFFICE (WHICH WOULD CONTINUE TO EXIST SEPARATELY AND ADMINISTRATIVELY BUT WOULD BE SUBJECT TO TASKING BY THE FORCE) AS WELL AS MILITARY UNITS. A SPECIFIC OPERATION, THUS MIGHT BE GIVEN TO THE F-2, OR TO SOME OTHER UNIT, OR A JOINT STRIKE FORCE MIGHT BE FORMED AND INDIVIDUAL ENTITIES TASKED TO PROVIDE UNITS, ETC. SIMILAR UNIFIED COMMANDS WOULD BE REPLICATED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IN THE VARIOUS MILITARY DISTRICTS UNDER THE BRIGADE COMMANDERS. THESE REGIONAL COMMANDS WOULD RELATE TO AND BE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE. THEY WOULD UNIFY, FOR REGIONAL PURPOSES, THE LOCAL ENFORCEMENT ASSETS. MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS NET AND TRANSPORT SERVICES WOULD BE USED TO AUGMENT EXISTING FACILITIES AND TO LINK CENTRAL TASK FORCE OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES WITH THE FIELD. GENERAL LOMBANA HAS AFFIRMED THAT THE PATTERN OF UNIFIED COMMAND WAS DEVELOPED AND TESTED SUCCESSFULLY IN MEDELLIN AREA TO COMBAT THE KIDNAPPING/

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CRIME WAVE THERE.

4. WE QUESTIONED LOMBANA ABOUT THE TIMING FOR THE GOC PLANS. THE GENERAL REPLIED THAT ONCE HE KNEW THE MAGNITUDE OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE, HE COULD DETERMINE THE INTENSITY AND EXTENT OF JOINT OPERATIONS THAT THEY COULD MOUNT. IT WOULD TAKE ONLY A VERY FEW WEEKS TO GET FORMAL PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL AND ISSUANCE OF NECESSARY DECREES LAYING DOWN ORGANIZATIONAL AND COORDINATING CHAINS OF COMMAND . LOMBANA ADDED THAT THE GOC ENVISAGED THIS OPERATION AS SEMI-PERMANENT AND INSTITUTIONAL IN NATURE AND NOT LIMITED TO ANY PARTICULAR TIME-FRAME.

5. COMMENT: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE NATIONAL TASK FORCE ABLE TO COLLATE AND ANALYZE INTELLIGENCE (AND

DEVELOP IT) AND PLAN OPERATIONALLY IN THE LIGHT THEREOF WOULD BE A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT AND EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFICIENT INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO COMBAT THE DRUG TRAFFIC. THIS IS IN OUR VIEW A VERY ENCOURAGING AND COMMENDABLE CONCEPT. WE SHOULD SUPPORT IT.

6. IT IS OBVIOUS TO US THAT THE MINISTRY IS UNWILLING TO PROCEED FURTHER TO IMPLEMENT ITS PROPOSALS UNTIL IT HAS A CLEAR IDEA OF HOW MUCH AID IT CAN EXPECT TO GET FROM THE USG. FOR THE PRESIDENT TO ESTABLISH THIS SET-UP BY DECREE DOES REQUIRE SOME INTERNAL BUREAUCRATIC "COSTS" THE GOC, IN EFFECT, WANTS TO KNOW IF IT IS WORTH IT. ALSO THERE IS SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ARGUMENT THAT THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE IMPLEMENT THE NATION-WIDE NET OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMANDS DEPENDS UPON HOW MUCH TRANSPORT COMMUNICATIONS/TRAINING AID THEY CAN EXPECT. WE ALSO NOTE THAT THE PROPOSAL DESCRIBED TO US IS AN OPTIMAL, INTENSE, NATION-WIDE EFFORT, AND THE ESTIMATES OF RESOURCES ARE GENEROUS AND OPTIMAL. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE MOD REALLY EXPECTS TO GET ALL IT ASKED FOR, AND THAT IT WOULD BE PREPARED TO IMPLEMENT PLANS FOR A STAGED EFFORT. BUT THEY DO EXPECT SIGNIFICANT NEW AID BASED UPON THE GOC BELIEF, FROM THE PRESIDENT ON DOWN, THAT THE USG, FROM THE PRESIDENT ON DOWN, PROMISED MASSIVE NEW AID. THIS IS A BELIEF THAT WAS STRENGTHENED BY THE ASSURANCES GIVEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER, THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER RANKIN
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OFFICIALS BY CODELS JAVITS AND WOLFF.

7. IN SHORT THE GOC DOES EXPECT A POSITIVE, TIMELY RESPONSE FROM US. UNTIL IT IS FORTHCOMING WE CAN EXPECT NO FURTHER CONCRETE IMPLEMENTING ACTION TO MOVE THE NEW PROPOSALS, AND THE USG WILL BE VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM THAT ITS FAILURE TO FULFILL A PLEDGE OF SUPPORT IS OBSTRUCTING MAJOR EFFORT TO INTERDICT THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC.
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